

Become a founding member of the VA Digital Service

On the heels of the launch of the United States Digital Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs is looking for highly experienced Digital Service Experts to join a similar Digital Service Team at VA. We are seeking the country's best developers, designers, and digital product managers to partner with internal teams across the agency to design and deploy world-class digital services for our Nation's Veterans. Digital Service Experts report to the VA Chief Technology Officer with support and direction from the VA Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and other senior leadership.

We encourage you to focus on your accomplishments and experience in directly designing and developing digital services in your résumé.

A Digital Service Expert is a GS-0301-15. This is a TERM appointment (not-to-exceed 2 years). Term appointments are non-status, nonpermanent appointments of limited duration. Term employees are eligible to earn leave and generally have the same benefits as permanent employees including health and life insurance, within-grade increases and Federal Employees Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan coverage. Term appointments may be extended up to 4 years without further competition.

Official position description below:

Digital Services Expert GS-0301-15

The goal of the Digital Services Expert is to work with a diverse group of stakeholders across the federal government to improve the digital services government delivers to citizens and business. The incumbent will identify the most effective levers for improving government digital services across government, based upon quantitative and qualitative assessments of user needs.

MAJOR DUTIES:

The incumbent uses their expertise to champion the use of modern technology development and management approaches, drawing heavily upon best practices from the consumer Internet industry such as open source and agile development processes. The incumbent uses their deep understanding of the characteristics of successful digital services and how they are built both inside and outside government, including user-centered design and development practices and modern consumer Internet technologies, to lead major initiatives, provide consultation on systems or policy proposals, and/or provide technical, policy, and programmatic guidance to government leaders at the most senior levels. The incumbent uses their demonstrated experience building and scaling organizations to evolve and grow the unit over time to fulfill its mission.

Incumbent collaboratively develops and tests the success of government-wide standards for digital services, leading to their adoption across citizen- and business-facing

government services. Identifies, develops, and builds support and tools (technical and policy) for implementing a common user experience and brand across government digital services. Leads the development of a single user experience for citizen and business facing digital services. Assesses the state of current projects in agencies and plans and/or leads interventions when corrective actions are required.

Incumbent contributes to a talent strategy designed to bring leadership and staff with the skills to deliver world-class digital services into the government, particularly in agencies, and identifies and assesses candidates. Interactively develops and refines the program strategy, based on interaction with agencies, key stakeholders, and expertise. Articulate the “for you, with you, by you” strategy of working with agencies, learns what works, adjusts the strategy as necessary. Incorporates agile development methodologies and open source practices into government product delivery.

Incumbent serves as a nationally recognized and respected authority and Agency spokesperson on a diverse range of issues related to technology, digital service delivery, and/or technology policy, as well as more widespread issues affecting the substantive office’s mission in which his/her expertise is often sought due to extensive knowledge and experience in one or more areas. Leads technology initiatives or technology policy initiatives across the government, promoting user centric-design, standards based approaches to development, and modern project management and development processes. Leads the adoption and creation of government-wide standards for developing digital services, based upon best practices from the private sector such as agile development methodologies and open source practices.

Incumbent works with other recognized technical experts within the agency and throughout the federal government, as well individuals throughout private industry to develop a coordinated approach to unique problems or areas in which Federal agencies or the private sector has previously not been involved or concerned. Plans and conducts pioneering work in his/her area of technology and/or technology policy to deliver digital services to American citizens and businesses using knowledge of latest consumer internet technologies and technology management approaches.

Incumbent manages complex stakeholder environments, working with senior level officials across agencies and in VA to build support and consensus for unit strategy and goals, which may be in conflict with agency plans. Incumbent plans and executes an iterative strategy for scaling an organization from startup phase to mature. Provides trusted, expert guidance on technology programs to senior agency officials on policies and programs of national significance.

Incumbent conducts sophisticated user research using quantitative and qualitative methods. Presents findings and leads programmatic and technical decision making based on this analysis with senior level officials and agency leadership. Leads re-design of complex business processes focusing on user needs and leads development of services based on re-design. Establishes and leads government-wide adoption of user experience and effectiveness measures for government digital services.

Incumbent confers with key government and private officials and top experts in his/her field, representing the government at technical symposia and conferences. Serves on agency, interagency and technical society committees of national importance as a recognized authority in the areas of technology and technology policy. Using technical leadership, outstanding creativity and exceptional judgment, he/she develops, defines and leads citizen and business facing digital service delivery efforts, devising innovative ways to solve problems of major importance to citizens. Reviews agency technology initiatives for technical and programmatic feasibility and adherence with the organizations and federal standards for citizen facing technology. Builds credible, trusted relationships with senior agency leaders and provides detailed and consultative guidance when corrective action is required.

Identifies, leads and participates in regional, national and/or international special projects or studies, work groups, task forces and panels, frequently focusing on unprecedented problems, policy making and shaping the future direction of government programs. Conceives, initiates and monitors policies, programs and projects dealing with the most challenging problems in the specialty area and of national significance to the agency. Performs other duties as assigned.

Mastery of using technologies to deliver services to consumers and businesses. Capability to plan and manage or review and recommend to the senior most level officials in government specific innovations (systems, operating positions, management philosophies, policies, measures) causing significant impact to citizen and business experience with government services or critical agency systems or programs. Expertise in building services driven by user needs. Expertise in user centered design and user testing. Expertise in product delivery, agile development methodologies, and open source software development. Familiarity or experience in working with high tech start-ups or private sector technology companies.

Mastery of consumer facing technology, allowing the incumbent to field, generate, and develop new programs, approaches, and systems that have a national impact. Expert knowledge of leading in complex operating environment, including organizational re-design, change management, and facilitation.

Expert knowledge of user centered design, consumer internet technologies, service delivery, technology management approaches, allowing the incumbent to provide sound and authoritative technical leadership on all issues related to the program. Ability to use expertise to lead efforts to re-design key business processes in order to increase efficiency and improve user experience. Expert in building partnerships with leadership to recommend and implement technology approaches for issues of national significance. Ability to lead complex, government-wide technology and technology policy initiatives from conception through implementation.

Expert analytical skills to apply a wide range of qualitative and/or quantitative methods for the assessment of user needs, resource prioritization, and program direction. Highest

level skills in oral and written communications to present sensitive recommendations to higher authority, to obtain compliance with standards/policies established by the unit, and to articulate the value of a common user experience for the government's digital services and the unit's mission.

The incumbent works in assigned areas under the general direction and guidance of the supervisor or, on occasion, under other senior division of office staff members. Projects generally are assigned by the supervisor. The supervisor outlines general assignment objectives and policies while delegating to the incumbent wide latitude for individual initiative, innovation and exercise of independence in planning, designing and approaching solutions to problems. The incumbent prepares analyses for ultimate use by other staff and policy-level officials in the office, and is expected to produce technically and substantively accurate work that complies with relevant policies and identifies potential implications inherent in methodology used. The supervisor and/or senior division staff will review work plans and progress. Completed work is reviewed overall for care and thoroughness of evaluations, quality of analysis, feasibility of recommendations and compatibility with other work in VA, and effectiveness in meeting requirements of expected results.

Under the broad administrative direction of the senior executive supervisor and with wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, performs work of an exceptional degree of difficulty and responsibility within VA and across agencies partners to improve the digital services delivered by the government of the United States. Responsibilities and knowledge of incumbent parallel those assigned typically to product senior managers whose breadth of knowledge and diverse programmatic expertise make him/her an expert in various matters related to technology and product delivery.

The incumbent often must function independently with guidelines which are only broadly stated and with issues for which precedents may be few or lacking. Thus, initiative and judgment are required in searching out, interpreting, and adapting existing guidelines. Knowledge of the budget, legislative and regulatory process is crucial to producing useful products, and the incumbent must remain current on policies, changes and issues relevant to assigned areas. The analyst must exercise considerable resourcefulness, self-motivation and inventiveness, and must show discretion in working on sensitive assignments. Understanding of various analytic techniques, including quantitative and statistical analyses, and their potential for application to issues is required.

The work concerns areas where little or no established practices or precedents within government are available to assist in problems solving, where progress is difficult and where new techniques and approaches need to be devised drawing upon leading practices from the private sector. Work at this level requires extensive expertise, coordination, analysis and continuing evaluation of government programs to establish comprehensive solutions or standards that yield tangible public benefit. The incumbent works to integrate leading technology practices into the government, working through complexities resulting from legal, technical, organizational, economic, fiscal, and other challenges.

Work involves planning, developing and carrying out vital projects and programs which are central to the federal government's delivery of services to citizens and business. The work product or service (e.g., the employee's advice, guidance or other results of the work) affects the work of other experts, the development of major aspects of administrative or professional programs or missions, the successful improvement of digital interactions between all citizens and business and the federal government.

Within VA, contacts are with staff at all levels, including the Executive in Charge and Chief Information Officer, Deputy Chief Information Officers, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Directors, Deputy Directors, Associate Directors, etc. Other contacts are with Cabinet and high-level officials and staffs of and the senior leadership of Federal agencies and departments, with Congressional staffs, GAO, CBO, and various advisory committees and councils. Business and private sector, media, academic, and general public contacts may also be appropriate. The incumbent must be able to utilize interpersonal skills to develop cooperative relationships. Powers of persuasion, awareness and tact are essential to problem recognition and resolution, as is appreciation of various responsibilities facing officials with whom the incumbent is dealing.

The purpose of contact is to justify, defend, negotiate or settle matters involving significant or controversial issues, e.g., recommendations affecting major systems, policies, or programs, dealing with substantial expenditures or significantly changing the nature and scope of technical projects, policy, or organizations. Contacts may secure or provide expert factual and analytical information on diverse program, budget, and policy topics or emerging issues and may include justifying, defending, negotiating or explaining sensitive, complicated and controversial issues. Work involves active participation in agency reviews, conferences, meetings, hearings, or presentations involving problems or issues of considerable consequence or importance. Persons contacted typically have diverse viewpoints, goals or objectives requiring the incumbent to achieve a common understanding of the problem and a satisfactory solution by convincing them, arriving at a compromise or developing suitable alternatives.

The work is largely sedentary. The incumbent must possess the flexibility and versatility of mind necessary to defend and negotiate matters involving significant controversial issues. May be required to work under stressful conditions, such as long hours, to complete sensitive and urgent work assignments.

The work is performed within an office or conference room setting.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

Federal agencies must provide reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities where appropriate. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the hiring agency directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for accommodation can be made by contacting marina.martin@va.gov.